



As people of faith and disciples of Jesus, our community at Liberation United Church of Christ stands with those who are protesting in the streets struggling for racial justice and fighting against racism and white supremacy in our culture and institutions. We declare that Black lives matter.

We share the grief and outrage over the violent murders of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Tony Mcdade as well as the many unarmed Black, Brown, and Indigenous people who have died at the hands of those we have entrusted to provide fair and equal protection under the law. Our faith compels us to confront racism as a false idol and a force that crucifies.

We know that Jesus calls us to build the Kin-dom of God here on earth. It is a call to a change of heart and of actions, seeing clearly the role of sin in ourselves and our society. We are humbled to acknowledge the sin of racism and White supremacy in ourselves, in our institutions, and in our country's living history. We seek, with God's help, and with the confidence that nothing truly separates any of us from the love of God, to do our part to overcome racism and heal the injustices in our society.

To that end: We are committed to joining the movement for black liberation. Following our leadership, we have been marching in the streets with other black-led churches and black-led organizations. In order to be of even more use to the movement, we have started a social justice committee together with Everett United Church of Christ. We hope for this committee to be a tool for doing the good work of fighting for justice both in our society and within our congregation.

We are committed to addressing racism, both its subtle and overt manifestations, within our church culture. For those of us who are white, we have committed ourselves to understanding our own white privilege and racism. As a result, we have postponed our regular Bible study to educate ourselves on matters of race, beginning a long and challenging conversation that will require the gifts of all of our members as well as external trainers and facilitators. We have started a reading group with the book, *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo.

We are committed to supporting and responding to the leadership of Black and Brown-led community-based organizations in our city and state who are demanding the defunding of the Seattle Police Department, the expansion of investments in housing, healthcare, childcare and other non-police solutions and an end to the prosecution of protestors and those living in encampments. We see the irony of protests against police brutality that are met with even more police brutality.

We are committed to working for peace, and we understand that this means confronting violence. It means addressing the violence of racism and anti-blackness. It means addressing the violence of poverty. It means addressing the violence of patriarchy and homophobia. It means addressing the violence of transphobia and transmisogyny. It means addressing the violence of a settler colonial society that occupies stolen land. It means addressing the violence of a toxic Christianity that follows empire instead of following Jesus. These forms of violence have to end before there can be real peace. As we chant in the streets: no justice, no peace.

We are committed above all to following the Way of Jesus with integrity, confronting the forces of violence and racism with love in our hearts and with our trust centered on the God of liberation at work in the people.

Pursuing Peace,
Pastor Jermell Witherspoon and Liberation United Church of Christ.